

# Saint John Neumann Church

## *Christian Initiation*

### *2026-2027*



**In-Person Sessions:** Sundays after the 11:00 a.m. Mass (12:15 - 2:00 p.m.), in the *Thomas Aquinas Room*, on the lower level of the Faith & Family Center.

**Contact:** Paul Stokell, Adult Formation Director  
[pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org)

The **Order of Christian Initiation of Adults** is how our parish walks with adults who desire to enter—or return to—the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. It is not simply instruction but a ministry of accompaniment, rooted in our parish’s mission to build relationships and “lead people to a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ.” Formation unfolds through small-group conversation, prayer, teaching, retreats, and the liturgical rites that mark each person’s growth in faith.

### **How do I get started?**

Every Inquirer meets with the Adult Formation Director for a conversation about their story, hopes, and questions. This helps address difficulties or challenges, and answer immediate or lingering questions. Basic information—such as an *Inquirer Form* and proof of Baptism—is gathered at this time. Adults may join us at any point in the year.

Parishioners wanting to learn more about the Church are welcome to take part in our sessions at any time. The door is always open!

Many who attend will be Christians from other traditions, Catholics seeking to complete their initiation, or those who are rediscovering their faith. Children over the age of seven can participate in OCI together with age-appropriate formation – enrollment in either a recognized Catholic school or our *Family of Faith* program.

The first stage is gentle and invitational, a time of Scripture, prayer, and conversation that has no obligations. A public commitment begins only when an Inquirer and their Sponsor freely choose to celebrate the *Rite of Entrance into the Order of Catechumens* or *Rite of Welcome of Baptized Candidates*.

Those preparing for Baptism normally participate for a full liturgical year, receiving their Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. Baptized Christians or returning Catholics may be received at other times, including during the Christmas liturgical season, or the Vigil of Pentecost.

---

**Please note:**

Those with certain marriage situations (including prior marriages) must have them addressed before receiving the Sacraments. Some marriages will need *convalidation* (recognition by the Church). Others may require a Tribunal process, always free of charge, which must be completed before making any future plans.

## Rites and the Catechumenate

The unbaptized enter the Order of Catechumens through the *Rite of Entrance*; baptized Christians celebrate the *Rite of Welcome*. Because the Church professes “one baptism,” Candidates remain distinct from Catechumens, even as they journey together.

The Catechumenate is a season of deeper formation in belief, worship, moral life, and prayer. Participants seek to grow in knowledge of and assent to what the Church believes and teaches. For the unbaptized, this period usually spans from one Easter season to the next.

## Lent and Final Preparation

Lent begins the period of Purification and Enlightenment. On the First Sunday of Lent, Catechumens are sent forth from the parish to the Bishop for the *Rite of Election*, where they are named the Elect—“chosen by God.”

The three public Scrutinies on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent, as well as the Presentations of the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, and the rites in Holy Week prepare them intensely for the sacraments.

## The Sacraments of Initiation & Mystagogy

At the Easter Vigil, the Elect receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. They are plunged into the waters of new birth, configured to Christ, and taste the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ for the first time. Meanwhile, baptized Candidates are received into full communion and confirmed at the Vigil of Pentecost.

After Easter, the newly initiated continue gathering to reflect on the mysteries they have received. Having shared in the Eucharist, they become part of the Body of Christ in the life of the parish. This season helps them grow into their new identity as disciples.

## What Will Be Expected?

- **Become registered, active members of our Parish.** Registration into SJN should take place as soon as possible if the Inquirer is not already part of a registered family.
- **Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation**, the most fundamental way to come to know what it means to be Catholic. That’s why our sessions are on Sundays – to help acquire the habit of *being at church* on the Day of the Lord.

- **Attend all sessions and Rites as scheduled.** If a situation occurs where absences result, the Director and the individual participant/Sponsor will need to evaluate what is happening, and what will need to be done. *Prospective Sponsors should consider this obligation carefully before making the commitment throughout OCI.*
- **Attend all Retreats and Days of Reflection, when they are offered.**

## **What does a Sponsor do? Who can be one?**

Sponsors and the participants they accompany form a tight, supportive group over time and the partnership becomes critical as time goes by. It is a considerable commitment to be sure, and not for everybody.

*A Sponsor must be a registered, active parishioner of St. John Neumann at least 17 years of age who has received all three Sacraments of Initiation. Sponsors from outside the parish must have a Letter of Good Standing from the parish they attend.*

Baptized non-Catholics could be sponsored by their Catholic spouses. A Participant's fiancé/e may be suitable as a Sponsor so long as the commitments to the OCI are met and *not* secondary to the details of preparing for a wedding. Parents cannot sponsor their own children.

Fitness to serve as a Sponsor is determined by the Director, with the help of the Evangelization Team. Members of the Team cannot act as Sponsors, as their responsibilities are different.



## **What about younger participants?**

A child at age seven is “of catechetical age,” who can begin to understand the basics of Christian faith. Unbaptized children aged seven years and older will be prepared to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil in the proper and historic sequence – Baptism, followed by Confirmation, followed by Eucharist – at the Easter Vigil or during Easter (*Code of Canon Law 97, 852 §1*). Children in OCI must be enrolled either at SJN through our *Family of Faith* program, or in a recognized Catholic school. This will enable them to develop a sense of community and set them on a course of ongoing Christian formation after they have received the Initiation Sacraments...Confirmation is *never* thought of as graduation, and ongoing formation is a critical part of ongoing Catholic life and discipleship.

# OCI Event Schedule, 2026-2027

<p><b>Thursday, June 11</b>  <b>Thursday, July 16</b>  <b>Thursday, August 13</b>  <b>Thursday, September 3</b>  <b>Tuesday, September 8</b></p>	<p><b>Becoming Catholic: Informal Sessions</b>  <b>6:30 p.m., Thomas Aquinas Room</b></p> <p><i>Inquirer Interviews</i>  <i>Team Members can speak with Inquirers, review information, and help them locate a Sponsor if needed.</i></p>
<p><b>September 13, 2026</b>  <b>24<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Time</b>  <b>(Lectionary Cycle A)</b></p> <p>130: Sir 27:30—28:7  Rom 14:7-9  Matt 18:21-35</p>	<p style="background-color: yellow;"><b>INQUIRY PERIOD BEGINS</b></p> <p><i>The Rescue Project:</i>  <i>Why Stories Are Important</i></p>
<p><b>September 20</b>  <b>25<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Time (A)</b></p> <p>133: Is 55:6-9  Phil 1:20c-24, 27a  Matt 20:1-16a</p>	<p><i>The Rescue Project:</i>  <i>Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?</i></p>
<p><b>September 27</b>  <b>26<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Time (A)</b></p> <p>136: Ez 18:25-28  Phil 2:1-11 or 2:1-5  Matt 21:28-32</p>	<p><i>The Rescue Project:</i>  <i>The Enemy Is the Enemy</i></p>
<p><b>October 4</b>  <b>27<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Time (A)</b></p> <p>139: Is 5:1-7  Phil 4:6-9  Matt 21:33-43</p>	<p><i>The Rescue Project:</i>  <i>It Gets Worse</i></p>
<p><b>Tuesday, October 6</b></p>	<p><b>OCI Informational Session</b>  <b>6:30 p.m., Thomas Aquinas Room</b></p>
<p><b>October 11</b>  <b>28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Time (A)</b></p> <p>142: Is 25:6-10a  Phil 4:12-14, 19-20  Matt 22:1-14</p>	<p><i>The Rescue Project:</i>  <i>What if Anything Has God Done About It?</i></p> <p><b>(N.B.: There is no OCI session on October 16 due to Big Walnut Local Schools/Olentangy Schools break.)</b></p>
<p><b>October 25</b>  <b>30<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Time (A)</b></p> <p>148: Ex 22:20-26  1 Thes 1:5c-10  Matt 22:34-40</p>	<p><i>The Rescue Project:</i>  <i>What Difference Does It Make?</i></p> <p><i>Those planning to take part in the Rites of Entrance and Welcome <b>MUST</b> have forms submitted and at least one Interview by this date.</i></p>

<b>Tuesday, October 27</b>	<b>OCI Informational Session 6:30 p.m., Thomas Aquinas Room</b>
<b>Saturday, October 31</b>	<b>The Rescue Project: Concluding Retreat, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Faith &amp; Family Center</b>  <i>Words Are Not Enough What Does God Want from Me? Getting Clarity on The Mission</i>
<b>November 1 All Saints' Day (A)</b>  667: Mal 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10 1 Thes 2:7b-9, 13 Matt 23:1-12	<b>Rites of Entrance &amp; Welcome, 11:00 a.m. Mass</b> <b>CATECHUMENATE SESSIONS BEGIN</b>  SLIDESHOW: Church History, Part I: Jesus to AD 1500  <i>Handouts: YOUCAT; New American Bible, Revised Edition</i>
<b>November 8 32<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Time (A)</b>  154: Wis 6:12-16 1 Thes 4:13-18 Matt 25:1-13	SLIDESHOW: Church History, Part II: AD 1500 to 1960  <i>Handout: Handbook of Prayers</i>
<b>November 15 33<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Time (A)</b>  157: Prv 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31 1 Thes 5:1-6 Matt 25:14-30	SLIDESHOW: Church History, Part III: 1960 to Right Now
<b>November 22 Christ the King (A)</b>  160: Ez 34:11-12, 15-17 1 Cor 15:20-26, 28 Matt 25:31-46	SLIDESHOW: What is the "Church Year?"  <i>Handout: The Year of Grace Calendar 2027</i>  <b>(N.B.: No session on November 29 due to Thanksgiving.)</b>
<b>December 6 Sunday II in Advent (Lectionary Cycle B)</b>  5: Is 40:1-5, 9-11 2 Pt 3:8-14 Mark 1:1-8	<i>Sycamore: The Power of Prayer</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #469 - #489)  What is prayer? Does prayer make a difference? How to pray.
<b>December 13 Sunday III in Advent (B) aka Gaudete Sunday</b>  8: Is 61:1-2a, 10-11 1 Thes 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28	<i>Sycamore: The Bible</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #11 - #19)  What is the Bible? Can we trust the Bible? How the Bible can change your life?  <b>(N.B.: No sessions during the Christmas Break.)</b>

<p><b>January 10, 2027</b> <b>Baptism of the Lord (B)</b></p> <p>21: Is 42:1-4, 6-7 Acts 10:34-38 Mark 1:7-11</p>	<p><b>Anointing of the Catechumens - 11:00 a.m. Mass</b></p> <p>SLIDESHOW: Sacraments &amp; Initiation</p>
<p><b>January 17</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Time (B)</b></p> <p>65: 1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20 John 1:35-42</p>	<p><i>Sycamore: The Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #193 - #207; #310 - #311)</p> <p>The power of the sacraments and the liturgy. How Baptism can change your life. Confirmation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p><b>January 24</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Time (B)</b></p> <p>68: Jon 3:1-5, 10 1 Cor 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20</p>	<p><i>Sycamore: The Holy Eucharist</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #208 - #223)</p> <p>The meaning of the Mass. The Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.</p>
<p><b>January 31</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Time (B)</b></p> <p>71: Dt 18:15-20 1 Cor 7:32-35 Mark 1:21-28</p>	<p><i>Sycamore: The Christian Vocations</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #145; #248 - #271; #400 - #425)</p> <p>The meaning of vocation. Love, sex, chastity, and the gift of children. Ordination and consecrated life.</p>
<p><b>February 7</b> <b>5<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Time (B)</b></p> <p>74: Job 7:1-4, 6-7 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23 Mark 1:29-39</p>	<p><i>Sycamore: Forgiveness, Healing and Mission</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #312 – 320; #224 - #247)</p> <p>Forgiveness and the Sacrament of Confession. Healing and the Sacrament of the Sick. Christian mission and the call to share our faith.</p>
<p><b>February 10</b> <b>Ash Wednesday</b></p> <p>219: Joel 2:12-18 2 Cor 5:20-6:2 Matt 6:1-6, 16-18</p>	<p><b>PURIFICATION &amp; ENLIGHTENMENT BEGINS</b></p> <p><i>Those Catechumens planning to take part in the Rite of Election MUST have at least one Interview by this date.</i></p>
<p><b>February 14</b> <b>I Lent (B)</b></p> <p>23: Gen 9:8-15 1 Pt 3:18-22 Mark 1:12-15</p>	<p><b>Rite of Sending of Catechumens to Election &amp; Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates: 9:00 a.m. Mass</b></p> <p><b>Diocesan Rite of Election 1:30 p.m., Site to be determined by the Bishop</b></p>
<p><b>February 21</b> <b>II Lent (B)</b></p> <p>26: Gen 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18 Rom 8:31b-34 Mark 9:2-10</p>	<p><i>Sycamore: Creation, Fall, Salvation</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #41 - 70)</p> <p>The goodness of creation. Suffering and sin. The gift of salvation.</p>

<p><b>February 28</b> <b>III Lent (B)</b></p> <p>29: Ex 20:1-7 1 Cor 1:22-25 John 2:13-25</p>	<p><b>The First Scrutiny – 9:00 a.m. Mass</b></p> <p>Sycamore: <i>Finding True Freedom</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #291 - #298; #343 – 351)</p> <p>Is there such a thing as right and wrong? Where can we find moral guidance? How do you discover your true identity?</p>
<p><b>Wednesday, March 3</b></p>	<p>Parish Lenten Penance Service, 7:00 p.m., in Church</p>
<p><b>March 7</b> <b>IV Lent (B)</b> <b>Lætare Sunday</b></p> <p>32: 2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23 Eph 2:4-10 John 3:14-21</p>	<p><b>The Second Scrutiny - 11:00 a.m. Mass</b></p> <p>Sycamore: <i>The Social Teaching of the Church</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #367 - #399; #426 - 461)</p> <p>The dignity of the human person and the right to life. Christian teaching about family, society and citizenship. Speaking the truth and following conscience.</p>
<p><b>Saturday, March 13</b> <b>V Lent (B)</b></p> <p>35: Jer 31:31-34 Heb 5:7-9 John 12:20-33</p>	<p><b>Lenten Day of Reflection</b> <b>9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Faith &amp; Family Center</b></p> <p>The Creed and the Four Marks of the Church: <b>One, Holy, Catholic &amp; Apostolic</b></p> <p><b>The Third Scrutiny - 4:00 p.m. Mass</b></p>
<p><b>March 21</b> <b>PALM SUNDAY (B)</b></p> <p>37: Mark 11:1-10 (w/Procession) 38: Is 50:4-7 Phil 2:6-11 Mark 14:1-15:47</p>	<p>SLIDESHOW: The Four Last Things (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #146 - #165)</p> <p>Death, judgment, and our longing for eternal life. Holiness, the saints, and our hope for Heaven. What Catholics believe about the Blessed Virgin Mary.</p>

## **THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM**

**Holy Thursday:** *Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper – March 25, 6:30 p.m.*

**Good Friday:** *Service of the Lord's Passion – March 26, 3:00 p.m.*

**Holy Saturday:** *Rehearsal for Easter Vigil – March 27, 10:00 a.m.*

**THE EASTER VIGIL:** **March 27, 8:30 p.m.** Elect and their Godparents should arrive at church *no later than 7:30 p.m.*  
*A reception will follow the Vigil.*

## **MYSTAGOGY SESSIONS**

*Neophytes (the newly baptized) will gather with Candidates and Adult Confirmandi after the 11:00 a.m. Mass on the dates given, to discuss their experiences and explore the move into a life of intentional, missionary discipleship.*

<p><b>April 11</b> <b>THIRD SUNDAY</b> <b>OF EASTER (B)</b></p> <p>47: Acts 3:13-15, 17-19 1 John 2:1-5a Luke 24:35-48</p>	<p><i>Sycamore: The Community of the Church</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #129 - #144)</p> <p>Why do we need the Church? The special place of the Catholic Church. Being Catholic today.</p>
<p><b>April 18</b> <b>FOURTH SUNDAY</b> <b>OF EASTER (B)</b></p> <p>50: Acts 4:8-12 1 John 3:1-12 John 10:11-18</p>	<p><i>Sycamore: The Meaning of Love</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #321 - #342, #359 - 366)</p> <p>What is love? How to love your neighbor. Knowing the love of God.</p>
<p><b>May 2</b> <b>SIXTH SUNDAY</b> <b>OF EASTER (B)</b></p> <p>56: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48 1 John 4:7-10 John 15:9-17</p>	<p><i>Sycamore: Mary &amp; the Hope of Heaven</i> (YOUCAT: Paragraphs #146 - #165)</p> <p>Death, judgment, and our longing for eternal life. Holiness, the saints, and our hope for Heaven. What Catholics believe about the Blessed Virgin Mary.</p>
<p><b>May 9</b> <b>THE ASCENSION</b> <b>OF THE LORD (B)</b></p> <p>58: Acts 1:1-11 Eph 1:17-23 or 4:1-13 Mark 16:15-20</p>	<p><i>Presentation: Devotions and Practices</i> (At Marian Grotto, weather permitting)</p> <p>What is the Rosary? What is a Chaplet? What is the <i>Liturgy of the Hours</i>? What are “sacramentals,” and how can we use them?</p>

## **VIGIL OF THE SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST**

**Saturday, May 15, 4:00 p.m. Mass**

Candidates, Elect (if any), Adult *Confirmandi* and their Sponsors  
ready to receive Sacraments should arrive at the Church for Rehearsal  
*no later than 2:30 p.m.*